

LETTRE DE MAR SHIMOUN, ADRESSEE A JOSEPH AVENOL LE 24 OCTOBRE 1933

No.9/2
Assyrian Patriarchate
Geneva.
October 24th, 1933.

His Excellency
Secretary General
League of Nations
Geneva.

Excellency,

Whereas a Committee has been set up in accordance with the resolution of the Council of the League of Nations dated 14th October, 1933, to establish the Assyrians now in Iraq outside that country; and whereas the emigration question requires careful examination from all its angles, I beg to transmit herewith my preliminary suggestions bearing on the question of emigration, trusting that these will help the Committee in its task.

As my legal adviser, Professor Borel, has already informed you in his letter of October 17th, 1933, I am at all times at Your and the Committee's disposal to clear up any particular point You or the Committee wish to discuss with me.

I may be permitted to add that the present situation of the Assyrians in Iraq is critical despite the assurances given by the Iraq Government to the contrary, for individual murders are still of common occurrence as you will observe from the copy of a report enclosed herewith, based on information received from six different sources, whose names can be disclosed if the writers are assured personal safety. Whilst on this subject, I beg to draw your attention to my telegram dated 16th September 1933, confirmed in my letter dated 24th September, with which I enclosed a statement showing the names of the 28 Assyrians killed subsequent to the orders to stop massacre. Despite those representations, no effective action has been taken on the spot to stop further murders.

I would also humbly suggest that some of the present misery of the Assyrians can be removed by the despatch of a relief committee to Iraq, pending further decisions of the Committee.

Would you be good enough to transmit this report with my suggestions to the Committee set up under the Council's resolution of 14th October, 1933, please.

I have the honour to be, Excellency,
Your obedient servant.

(signed) ESHAI SHIMUN
By the Grace of God, Catholicos
Patriarch, of the Assyrians

Preliminary suggestions made by His Beatitude the Mar Shimun,
Catholicos Patriarch of the Assyrians, for the emigration of the
Assyrians from Iraq.

- (1) A general amnesty proclamation to be issued by the Iraq Government to cover all alleged offences in regard to:
- (a) Assyrian National movement and/or
 - (b) All alleged offences resulting from the settlement scheme.
- (2) Assyrian leaders now under Government detention to be set free and allowed to return to their homes pending emigration.
- (3) Effective measures to be taken by the League of Nations to stop the present individual murders.
- (4) Urgent steps to be taken to send a relief committee to Iraq to remove misery from thousands of Assyrians who are left homeless and destitute.
- (5) An Enquiry Commission appointed by the League of Nations to proceed to Iraq with full powers to enquire into the reasons leading up to the recent massacre of the Assyrians; the extent of the excesses committed, and define the responsibility of the two parties concerned.
- (6) The Assyrians to be assured, by the Enquiry Commission, full liberty to speak, and their safety to be adequately safeguarded until they leave Iraq territory.
- (7) A special emigration committee to be set up under the auspices of the League of Nations to remain in Iraq until migration is successfully completed.
- (8) The Assyrian Patriarch to be allowed to return to Iraq to help the Emigration Committee. Provision for his safety to be made.
- (9) Assyrians possessing Mulk lands (privately owned lands) or any other privately owned immoveable property, wishing to leave Iraq, to have their mulk valued by the League's Commission or by a sub-committee and paid for by the Iraq Government.
- (b) This similarly applies to Assyrian Waqf property (property of charitable or religious institutions).
- (10) Full indemnity to the relatives of persons massacred, other than those actually killed in action on the Iraq-Syro frontier.
- (b) Valuation of and payment for all Assyrian property movable or immoveable, looted or destroyed.
- (11) Iraqis indebted to Assyrians should settle such custanding debts prior to emigration and/or such debts should be collected by the new State accepting the Assyrians on their behalf in accordance with a procedure to be laid down for the purpose in agreement with the Government of Iraq.
- (12) Assyrians forced to embrace Islam or Assyrian women kept by Iraqi troops or Muslim population to be set free.
- (13) A new country, other than Iraq, to be found under the auspices of the League of Nations for the new settlement of the Assyrians in a manner that should avoid the repetition of the very near past, permanent peace and security for the Assyrians and Not to be used for any political ends.
- (13) B. Agricultural and medical aspects to be among other main considerations.
- (14) Open door to Assyrian refugees, from all countries, wishing to establish themselves in the new Assyrian settlement on conditions to be agreed upon with the Government concerned.

(signed) ESHAI SHIMUN
By the Grace of God,
Catholicos Patriarch,
of the Assyrians.

[« Settlement of the Assyrians of Iraq », *Archives de la Société des Nations*,
C.Min.Ass.4.1933.I.]

LETTRE DE MAR SHIMOUN, ADRESSEE A JOSEPH AVENOL LE 25 OCTOBRE 1933

No. II/2
Assyrian Patriarchate,
Geneva.
October 25th, 1933.

His Excellency
Secretary-General
League of Nations,
Geneva.

Excellency,

In continuation of my letter No.9/2 of 24/10/33.

As I am profoundly keen to facilitate the task of the Committee duly set up under the Council resolution of 14th October, 1933, for the establishment of the Assyrians in a country, other than Iraq, I have the honour to append herewith names of possible countries to which the Assyrians would wish to emigrate. These have been arranged in order of preference, the comprehensive details of which need further study. nevertheless, they may help the Committee in ascertaining the wishes of the Assyrians generally.

I should be grateful if you would very kindly bring the contents of this letter to the notice of the Committee in question.

(A) Syria.

Financially, the Assyrian emigration to Syria - due to its proximity to Iraq - would be far less objectionable than any other remote country.

The Assyrians would, however, like to know in which part of Syria or the Lebanon they would be settled. This would necessarily take into consideration the climatic conditions and agricultural possibilities.

The Assyrians emigrating from Iraq to be accepted en bloc for the acceptance of a section only would further weaken the Assyrians whose desire has always been a satisfactory settlement in compact community, as by this means alone can they preserve their existence as a race. With the projected emancipation of Syria, a compact settlement is of primary importance.

Assyrians outside Iraq to be permitted to join their compatriots on conditions to be agreed upon.

The Assyrians, if assured equality and justice, would - like all the other inhabitants - willingly abide by the laws of the land.

(B) Brazil.

I understand the Nansen Office has submitted proposals for the emigration of the Assyrians from Iraq and their settlement in Brazil. Assyrians have, from time to time, applied for settlement in Brazil or in some other adjacent colonies with similar possibilities as those in Brazil. There is already an Assyrian colony there. Guided by the report of an expert, Brazil would appear to be acceptable to the Assyrians from climatic, agricultural, racial, linguistic, religious and educational points of view. These are also matters for more study.

The open door referred to under "Syria" equally applies to any country where the Assyrians will be settled.

(C) Argentine.

Conditions to be studied on the spot. An expert who is acquainted with affairs there reports that the present Government is not disposed towards new emigrations. If this is so, that country will be cut of the question.

(D) France.

(E) Spain.

Have been suggested. Possibilities subject to consideration.

(F) Cyprus

Has also been suggested, but lack of water, lack of pastures and the likewise leave very little or no hope for economic prosperity. My short sojourn in Cyprus goes to justify this view. The Assyrians have never before expressed desire to go to Cyprus and I am sure the proposal would not appeal to them.

(G) Palestine

Undesirable politically.

(H) Canada

The Assyrians have in the past applied for settlement in Canada. Their request was not entertained. If that is now possible, the proposal may be worth while consideration.

I have the honour to be,
Excellency
Your obedient Servant,
(Signed) Eshai Shimun.

By the Grace of God, Catholicos Patriarch
of the Assyrians.

[« Settlement of the Assyrians of Iraq », *Archives de la Société des Nations*,
C.Min.Ass.4.1933.I.]